

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 AID-20 DRC-01 NIC-01 /117 W

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R 182020Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7359

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 2545

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, HO

SUBJECT: FONMIN BATRES PRESS CONFERENCE

1. FONMIN CESAR A. BATRES HELD PRESS CONFERENCE ON JUNE 14 AND ANSWERED SEVERAL QUESTIONS INCLUDING ONE ON THE POSSIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING RELATIONS WITH VARIOUS COMMUNIST NATIONS. THE SENSATIONALIST DAILY, EL CRONISTA, HAD CARRIED A STORY IN ITS JUNE 13 EDITION STATING THAT HONDURAS IS CONSIDERING THE POSSIBILITY OF HAVING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE USSR, CUBA AND NORTH KOREA. THE STORY CAUSED REPORTERS TO SEEK AN IMMEDIATE NEWS CONFERENCE TO CLARIFY THE POSITION OF THE GOVERNMENT.

2. BATRES MADE THE FOLLOWING MAIN POINTS:

(A) DENIED THAT THE GOH HAD INITIATED ANY NEGOTIATIONS AIMED AT ESTABLISHING RELATIONS WITH THE USSR, NORTH KOREA OR CUBA;

(B) EMPHASIZED THAT HONDURAS' POLICY IS TO ESTABLISH RELATIONS WITH ANY COUNTRY IN THE WORLD REGARDLESS OF IDEOLOGY IF IT IS IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST;

(C) WHEN QUESTIONED ABOUT THE STANDARD FRUIT "PLOT," HE SAID THAT THE ONLY THING THE GOH HAS IN ITS POSSESSION IS THE REPORT OF

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ITS AMBASSADOR IN COSTA RICA IN REGARD TO THE CHARGES AND IS

AWAITING DOCUMENTS FROM THE PANAMAIAN GOVERNMENT THAT PROVE THE ALLEGATIONS;

(D) STATED THAT HONDURAS IS PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE AT ANY TIME AND PLACE IN ORDER TO RESOLVE THE BORDER DISPUTE WITH ELSALVADOR;

(E) EMPHASIZED THAT HE HAS ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT A SETTLEMENT IS URGENT BUT REMARKED IT IS BETTER TO HAVE A WELL STRUCTURED SETTLEMENT THAN ONE WHICH IS LIABLE TO BE UNSTABLE; AND

(F) STATED THAT IT IS ESSENTIAL TO BE PATIENT IN A SEARCH FOR A RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM.

3. COMMENT: BATRES WAS CLEARLY TRYING TO DISCOUNT RUMORS ABOUT ESTABLISHING RELATIONS WITH ADDITIONAL COMMUNIST COUNTRIES. THE REGIME'S ENEMIES HAVE CONSISTENTLY TRIED TO PICTURE THE GOVERNMENT AS LEFTIST OR COMMUNIST AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SUCH RELATIONS WOULD HAVE GIVEN THEM ADDITIONAL AMMUNITION. THE GOVERNMENT IS NEITHER LEFTIST, COMMUNIST NOR UNSTABLE, BUT ITS ABILITY TO PRESENT A TRUE PICTURE OF ITS POSITION HAS BEEN DISTORTED BY ITS DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN ENEMIES AS WELL AS BY ITS OWN INEPTNESS IN DESCRIBING GOVERNMENT POLICIES.

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